

October 11, 2016

Subject: Sustainable Communities Planning Grants & Incentives Best Practices Pilot

Reporting Period: August – October 2016

Staff Lead: Allison Joe, Deputy Director, SGC

Michael McCormick, Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Recommended Action

N/A – For Discussion Only

Summary

Staff requests council input on the proposed “Sustainable Communities Planning Grant and Implementation Best Practices Pilot,” (Pilot) a subset of the Sustainable Communities Planning Grants and Incentives Program (SCPGIP), in an effort to support local land use planning efforts related to climate and the State’s statutory planning priorities.

Leveraging the SCPGIP and programmatic support from the Governor’s Office of Planning & Research (OPR), the SGC has a unique opportunity to engage local governments in implementing best practices and creating replicable pilots throughout the state. The SGC previously funded 126 grants totaling more than \$63 million from Proposition 84 to provide local governments and regional agencies development and implementation support for plans that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve other sustainability objectives. Since the distribution of the grants, the SGC has continually bolstered the objectives of the SCPGIP to realize meaningful capital investments in our local communities and provide tools and resources to help attain our State’s climate goals on a local scale.

As proposed, Pilot applicants may apply for up to \$50,000 to support the development and/or implementation of a specific portion of a land use plan, land protection or management practice, or development project, that targets sustainable development and the State’s climate policies with the express intent of 1) implementation of that project or plan; and 2) identification of a best practice to share amongst land use planning and policy peers. This small grant is not intended to fund a long-range plan or project in its entirety. Proposed Pilot applications must support local implementation of state policies, with a focus on creating more resilient communities through climate adaptation and mitigation, with a priority focus on disadvantaged communities.

Approximately \$1.9 million in Proposition 84 funds are available as a result of reverted funds from grantees during Round 1 of the SCPGIP, of which this proposed Pilot would request authority to expend \$250,000 from the Council at a later date.

Background

In September 2016, the Governor’s Office and all of the agencies of the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) jointly released California’s “Vibrant Communities and Landscapes” vision, describing how state policies can balance land use in California’s climate change policies and how the State can support actions, at all levels of government, to facilitate development and conservation patterns that help to achieve the State’s climate goals.

The Sustainable Communities Planning Grant and Incentives Program Best Practices Pilot Program builds upon the guidelines and principles of past SGC Planning Grant Guidelines, Proposition 84 requirements, and various other State climate change policy and planning priorities. While maintaining the goals, objectives, and principles of the SCPGIP, the Pilot seeks to create more targeted funding opportunities that capture best practices within sustainable planning practices.

Prior to launching the Pilot, OPR staff developed and implemented a preliminary version by leveraging the work of CivicSpark, a Governor's Initiative AmeriCorps program dedicated to building capacity for local governments to address climate change and water management needs. This preliminary phase was completed in September 2016, and served as a tool to identify the means of capacity that OPR can provide to participating jurisdictions. While creating proof of concept, this phase also resulted in case study reports, using the template in Appendix D, which will be uploaded to the OPR website and can be used by the State in inform policy discussions and efforts to scale successful local initiatives around the state.

The Pilot provides a mechanism to support local planning, policy development, and implementation and align local actions with State policies and priorities. SGC, OPR and program partners work with all jurisdictions that are awarded funding to:

- Provide policy development guidance, technical assistance, and implementation support,
- Identify and facilitate connections to resources and support across State agencies,
- Identify and support the creation of scalable policy and project implementation opportunities, and
- Provide a consistent template and methodology for documenting and sharing replicable case studies.

Additional details are provided in the attached Guidelines draft. Based on Council discussion and direction, staff will bring a formal proposal for this Pilot at a future Council meeting.